

Lessons from the Field: Improving Value Chains and Developing Communities

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Abstract

The value chain concept has been used widely as a market system approach to development. It seeks to understand the challenges, opportunities, resources, players, and various relationships within a particular industry—from input suppliers to end-market buyers. This concept was used to create transformations among the lives of poor farmers as well as build local capacities to improve the value chain. The presentation will showcase the results of a research and development project entitled “Developing vegetable and fruit value chains and integrating them with community development in the southern Philippines” supported by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research. The project, which was implemented by the Landcare Foundation of the Philippines Inc. (LFPI), was an action research that aimed to (1) develop value chains to improve the level and sustainability of smallholder net income and livelihood, and (2) maximize community benefits from improved value chains and enhance community capacity to support value chain performance. It features processes, networks, technology innovations, and outcomes. Considered as an important accomplishment of the project was the development of an extension approach that establishes the direct link between improving the value chain and building local capacities towards effectively managing the entire chain. Through the use of the approach, significant outcomes were attained such as improved practices from land preparation to market. Farmers have adapted modular planting to better meet the market demands. Consequently, farmers attained better vegetables production in terms of quantity and quality. They have also developed their own marketing scheme that proved to be effective and viable to farmers.